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THE  
APOSTOLIC MINISTRY:

A  
DISCOURSE

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## DISCOURSE.

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**Mark 16: 15. Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.**

THESE words, uttered by the Son of God, a few moments before his ascension, contain the last precept which he ever delivered to his disciples. They constitute the commission under which we labor to extend the reign of the Messiah; and they furnish the assurance on which we rely, that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ. A proper understanding of the text must therefore convey important instruction on the nature and duties of the Christian ministry.

The precept in the text is, "Go ye into all

the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

I. What is this *Gospel* which we are here commanded to preach? The Gospel is good news. What good news are we then commissioned to proclaim?

In order to answer this question, let us glance at the moral condition of those to whom the gospel is sent.

In the beginning, God created man in his own image, with a moral constitution perfectly adapted to a holy life, and placed before him every motive which should impel a moral agent to a course of spotless virtue. The law under which we were created was holy and just and good. The probation assigned to us was, however, wholly subjected to the principle of law. Its conditions were two: first, the man that doeth these things shall live by them; and secondly, cursed is every man that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. Through the abounding grace of God, eternal life was promised as the reward

of obedience, and on the other hand, disobedience to the law, or, rebellion against the moral government of the universe, was punishable with eternal death, banishment from the presence of God, misery everlasting. Under our first probation no provision was made for pardon, and therefore no hope was offered to the guilty. Every thing was to be gained by perfect obedience, every thing was to be lost by a single transgression

Such were the moral conditions under which we were originally created. But our first parents sinned, and "by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners." Without inquiring here into the manner in which his posterity are affected by the fall of Adam, it is sufficient to state the fact, that, from the date of the first transgression there has not been "a just man on earth who has not sinned." The moral blight fell upon all born of woman. The whole race became rebels against God. "They did not like to retain Him in their knowledge," and preferred to live in open de-

fiance of his authority. "The thoughts of their heart became evil, only evil continually." Sin became the irrevocable habit of man. Though impelled by the constitution of his nature to worship something, he chose to worship birds and four footed beasts and creeping things, nay the work of his own hands, rather than "God over all who is blessed forevermore." "The earth was filled with violence" and steeped in pollution. In every single individual of our race, unrenewed by the Spirit of God, evil tendency assumed the form of fixed and unalterable habit, and thus every man was making himself meet for eternal banishment from all that is holy; while at the same time, he was "treasuring up unto himself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

The conditions of the probation under which we were created having thus been universally violated, nothing remained but for the law to take its course. By the deeds of the law could no man be justified, for we had broken the law

during our whole existence. We were thus all under condemnation. The law contained no provision for pardon. Sentence had been passed upon us, and we were awaiting the day of its execution. Earth had become a mere suburb of hell, into which death was commissioned to sweep the myriads of our race, from the first sinner, Adam, to the last of his smitten posterity.

But though all was lost, the compassions of God were not exhausted, and he did not leave us to perish without hope. The terms of our first probation having been violated, eternal life on the principles under which we were originally created, was impossible. It pleased our Father in Heaven to offer us a second probation on infinitely more favorable conditions, so that although we had "sinned and come short of the glory of God," we might be "freely justified by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." But before this new probation could be offered to us, it was necessary that the law which we had

broken should be magnified and made honorable. It must be perfectly and triumphantly obeyed by a being in our nature, and yet one who by his own nature was not under the law of humanity. No other being than the Son of God himself was competent to assume the work of our redemption, and our "help was laid upon one that was mighty." "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "In the fulness of time God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." The Messiah fulfilled every requirement of the law in our stead, and, "as by the disobedience of one the many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one the many were made righteous." He suffered whatever was necessary to redeem us from the curse of the law. He died for our offences, and offered himself without spot to God in our stead. His offering was accepted,

and, to assure us of its acceptance, he was raised from the dead. Having finished the work that had been given him to do, he ascended to "the glory which he had with the Father before the world was." Having "humbled himself, and became obedient to death, the death of the cross, God hath highly exalted him and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and of things on earth, and of things under the earth, that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

By this interposition of the Son of God on our behalf, the destiny of man was changed. A new probation on more favorable conditions was granted us. By the conditions of the former probation we were doomed to despair in consequence of a single transgression. Now, through the righteousness of Christ, though guilty of innumerable sins, we may be accepted through the beloved. "God is well pleased for his righteousness' sake, for he hath magni-



fied the law and made it honorable." On the most merciful conditions, repentance for sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, every child of Adam may be pardoned, justified, sanctified and raised to a higher glory than that which he had lost by his own wilful transgression. Henceforth the gate of heaven stands as wide open for all born of woman as the gate of hell. The change in our condition is such as the imagination of man could never have conceived. It is a change from darkness to light, from death to life, from pollution to purity, from a dwelling forever in hell with the spirits of the damned, to an "inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation."

Every one must at once perceive that this is the great event in the history of our world. Compared with it, what are the revolutions of nations, what the deliverance of peoples from bondage, what the progress of man from ignorance to knowledge, and from barbarism to

civilization! Nay, could we combine in one event all the most stupendous social changes which the world has ever seen, they would all be lighter than the dust of the balance, in comparison with the mystery of Christ and him crucified. This is the good news spoken of in the text.

II. Let us in the next place inquire what is meant by preaching this gospel.

The word preach, in the new testament, has a meaning different from that which at present commonly attaches to it. We understand by it the delivery of an oration, or discourse, on a particular theme, connected more or less closely with religion. It may be the discussion of a doctrine, an exegetical essay, a dissertation on social virtues or vices, as well as a persuasive unfolding of the teaching of the Holy Ghost. No such general idea was intended by the word as it is used by the writers of the New Testament. The words translated *preach* in our version are two. The one signifies simply to herald, to announce, to pro-

claim, to publish ; the other, with this general idea, combines the notion of good tidings ; and means, to publish, or be the messenger of, good news. From what I have already said of the nature of the gospel message, it is evident that no other idea would so well have corresponded with the facts of the case. A great and unexpected change had been wrought in the condition of humanity. Our whole race had been, by a most astonishing act of grace, redeemed from inconceivable misery. They, however, remained ignorant both of their danger and of their deliverance. The knowledge of this act of infinite love had been communicated to a few men who had availed themselves of the gracious conditions of the new covenant, and had consecrated their whole being henceforth to their Redeemer. The rest of the world was wrapt in Egyptian darkness. Mankind still continued under the curse of the law, and were passing by millions to receive in everlasting despair the just demerit of their transgressions. The command was, go abroad every

where, proclaim to every creature the news of redemption ; tell them of the love of God in Christ Jesus. All things are now ready, bid them come and welcome to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

When the Israelites were bitten by the fiery flying serpents, and the bite was inevitably fatal, Moses was directed to set up a brazen serpent, with the assurance that whosoever that had been bitten, looked upon it, should be healed. You can imagine how the first man who had felt its saving efficacy, flew to communicate the news to his brethren, and urge them to avail themselves of the remedy which had delivered him from death. Every man who was healed became immediately a herald of the glad tidings to others. Every one who was saved became a publisher of the salvation, or in other words, a preacher, until in a few minutes the news spread throughout the encampment, and in this sense every tribe was evangelized.

Allow me to illustrate the meaning of this

term, as used by our Lord, by an occurrence of which I was an eye-witness. It so chanced, that at the close of the last war with Great Britain, I was temporarily a resident of the city of New York. The prospects of the nation were shrouded in gloom. We had been for two or three years at war with the mightiest nation on earth, and, as she had now concluded a peace with the continent of Europe, we were obliged to cope with her single-handed. Our harbors were blockaded. Communication coast-wise, between our ports, was cut off. Our ships were rotting in every creek and cove where they could find a place of security. Our immense annual products were moulding in our ware-houses. The sources of profitable labor were dried up. Our currency was reduced to irredeemable paper. The extreme portions of our country were becoming hostile to each other, and differences of political opinion were embittering the peace of every household. The credit of the government was exhausted. No one could predict when the

contest would terminate, or discover the means by which it could much longer be protracted.

It happened that on a Saturday afternoon in February, a ship was discovered in the offing, which was supposed to be a cartel, bringing home our commissioners at Ghent, from their unsuccessful mission. The sun had set gloomily, before any intelligence from the vessel had reached the city. Expectation became painfully intense, as the hours of darkness drew on. At length a boat reached the wharf, announcing the fact that a treaty of peace had been signed, and was waiting for nothing but the action of our government to become a law. The men on whose ears these words first fell, rushed in breathless haste into the city, to repeat them to their friends, shouting, as they ran through the streets, peace! peace! peace! Every one who heard the sound repeated it. From house to house, from street to street, the news spread with electric rapidity. The whole city was in commotion. Men bearing lighted torches were flying to and fro, shouting like

madmen, peace! peace! peace! When the rapture had partially subsided, one idea occupied every mind. But few men slept that night. In groups they were gathered in the streets and by the fire-side, beguiling the hours of midnight by reminding each other that the agony of war was over, and that a worn out and distracted country was about to enter again upon its wonted career of prosperity. Thus, every one becoming a herald, the news soon reached every man, woman and child in the city, and in this sense, the city was evangelized. All this you see was reasonable and proper. But when Jehovah has offered to our world a treaty of peace, when men doomed to hell may be raised to seats at the right hand of God, why is not a similar zeal displayed in proclaiming the good news? Why are men perishing all around us, and no one has ever personally offered to them salvation through a crucified Redeemer.

This then is, I think, the generic idea of preaching conveyed in the New Testament.

It is the proclamation to every creature, of the love of God to men through Christ Jesus. This is the main idea. To this our Lord adds, according to the other evangelist, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The duty then enjoined in our Lord's last command is two fold : First, to invite men to avail themselves of the offer of salvation ; and, secondly, to teach them to obey the commands of Christ, so that they may become meet for the kingdom of heaven. In so far as we do these, we preach the gospel. When we do anything else, it may, or it may not, be very good ; but in the sense here considered, it is not preaching the gospel.

Hence we see that we may deliver discourses on subjects associated with religion, without preaching the gospel. A discourse is not preaching because it is delivered by a minister, or spoken from the pulpit, or appended to a text. Nothing is I think, properly preaching, except the explaining the teachings, or enforcing the commands of Christ and his apostles.



To hold forth our own inferences, or the inferences of other men, drawn from the gospel ; to construct intellectual discourses which affect not the conscience ; to show the importance of religion to the temporal well-being of men, or the tendency of the religion of Christ to uphold republican institutions, and a hundred topics of a similar character, may or may not be well ; but to do either or all of them certainly falls short of the idea of the apostle, when he "determined to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified."

And moreover, the command of Christ supposes our appeal to be made *directly* to the consciences of men ; relying *for success wholly* on the promised aid of the Holy Ghost. Our Savior gives us no directions concerning any indirect or preparatory labor. The preparation of the heart is a work which the Lord has reserved for himself. We are not to go about making men think well of religion in general, with the intention of afterwards directing them to Christ, and urging them to obey God.

The Son of God has left us no directions for civilizing the heathen, and then Christianizing them. We are not commanded to teach schools in order to undermine paganism, and then, on its ruins, to build up Christianity. If this is our duty, the command must be found in another gospel ; it is not found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are, at once and always, to set before all men their sin and danger, and point them to "the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world." And here I would ask, are we not liable to err in these respects ? For instance, when we profess to preach the gospel, is it right to take as a text the words of inspiration, and then discourse on something which inspiration never taught ? Is it not enough that what we say is true ; so is geometry, or chemistry, or metaphysics ; but is it the truth which Christ came from heaven to reveal ? Again, is not our object frequently far too low in preaching ? Do we not sometimes preach with the direct design merely of creating in men a respect for

religion ; and of inducing them to aid us in promoting the objects of religious benevolence, instead of striving to make them, by means of this very sermon, new creatures in Christ Jesus ? Do we not labor, as it is called, to build up a good society ; that is to collect around us the rich and the well-conditioned, instead of laboring to save their souls from perdition ? The Almighty God sends us to make known his offer of salvation to sinful men ; and we, instead of delivering his message, content ourselves with teaching them to pay a decent respect to us, and to our services. In the mean time, we allow their immortal souls to go unwarned to eternal perdition. On whose conscience will the blood of these souls rest ?

Such, then, is the preaching of the gospel ; it is the proclamation of the love of God to men in Christ Jesus. It may be in public or in private, to one or to many, from the pulpit or at the fire-side. Whenever we set before men the message of mercy, and urge them to obey the commands of Christ, then we preach

the gospel in obedience to the precept in the text.

III. But who is thus to preach the gospel?

What would be the answer to this question, if we listened to the voice of common humanity? When the brazen serpent was lifted up, who was to carry the good news throughout the camp? When the glad tidings of peace arrived in the city, who was to proclaim it to his fellow-citizens? When the news of peace with God, through the blood of the covenant, is proclaimed to us, who shall make it known to those perishing in sin? The answer in each case is, *every one*. Were no command given, the common principles of our nature would teach us that nothing but the grossest selfishness would claim to be exempted from the joyful duty of extending to others the blessing which we have received ourselves.

But, besides this, we have, in the text, the command of Christ. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature;" and, "lo! I am with you always, even

unto the end of the world." The command is as universal as discipleship, and it is to continue obligatory till the Son of man shall come.

Does any one say that this command was given only to the apostles? It may or may not have been so; but were they alone included in the obligation which it imposes? The address at the last supper was given to them alone, as were many other of the instructions of our Lord; but were they the only persons to whom the words spoken apply? Is it affirmed that they and those whom they should appoint are alone to preach the word? I answer that Jesus Christ never said so, and we have no right to add to this any more than to any other of his commandments.

But let us see how the apostles themselves understood the precept. Their own narrative shall inform us. "At that time there was a great persecution against the church that was at Jerusalem, and they were scattered abroad throughout all the regions of Judea and Samaria, *except the apostles.*" "Therefore, they

that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word."—Acts viii : 1, 4. "Then they that were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word to none but Jews only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake also to the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord." These men were not apostles, nor even original disciples of Christ, for they were men of Cyprus and Cyrene. Yet they went everywhere preaching the word, and in so doing they pleased the Master, for the Holy Spirit accompanied their labors with the blessing from on high. The ascended Savior thus approved of their conduct, and testified that their understanding of his last command was correct.

If we need any farther confirmation of the interpretation which we have given of the pre-

cept in the text, we find it in other portions of our Lord's teaching. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened." The words here indicate the manner in which the kingdom of Christ is to extend itself. Leaven assimilates the whole mass to itself by the contact of particle with particle—each particle, as soon as it is leavened, communicating its own virtue to all the particles surrounding it. So every disciple of Christ is bound, by proclaiming Christ to those near to him, to extend the kingdom of the Redeemer; and every one who becomes a disciple is bound to make it his chief business to disciple others.

Again, our Lord declares that every one who believes in him shall be the means of imparting salvation to others. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow

rivers of living water." This he spake of the Spirit which, not the *apostles*, but *they that believe on him* should receive. Thus, as our Lord is the living fountain from which every believer drinks; so every one who has drunk of this fountain becomes, in this secondary sense, a fountain to all who are about him.

So, in the message to the churches, delivered by the ascended Savior to the Apostle John, we find these remarkable words: "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come, and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

You see then, brethren, the nature and duty of the church of Christ. It consists of the whole company of penitent sinners, united to Christ by faith, animated by the indwelling of his Holy Spirit, every one partaking with Christ in that love of souls which moved him to offer up himself, and every one laboring after his example for the salvation of the world. This



is the object for which the believer lives, as it was the object for which Christ lived. This consecration of himself to Christ for this purpose, is a matter of personal obligation. It cannot be done by deputy. It must be done by the man himself. He can no more delegate it to another, than he can delegate faith, or repentance, or prayer, or holy living. Every disciple must be a discipler. Every individual is leaven, and he must assimilate to himself all that comes into contact with him. As he himself drinks of the fountain, he must become a fountain to his fellow men; otherwise, he has not drunk of the fountain himself. If he bear not fruit, he is cut off as a branch, and is withered.

This is the first and primary duty of a disciple, and to it his whole life must be conformed. He may enter upon no calling, he may occupy no station, he may indulge in no amusement inconsistent with this elementary duty of discipleship. A revival of religion represents a church in its normal condition, the condition

which Christ always intended it to maintain. Then every believer makes it his great concern to call men to repentance, not as a matter of form, but with earnest and moving persuasion. Every convert is inviting his former companions to turn unto the Lord. But, if this manner of life is appropriate to a revival, it is appropriate to all times; for men are everywhere and at all times sinners hastening to the judgment seat, and they must all perish unless they be redeemed by the blood of Christ.

It would be easy to show that it is by involving this obligation in the very elementary idea of discipleship, that Christ has provided for the universal triumph of his church. On this depends the vitality of personal religion. We can never in earnest call men to repentance, unless we are living holy and penitent lives ourselves. Hence, also arises the separation of the church from the world, and hence the antagonism which Christ declares must always exist between them. "Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the

world, therefore the world hateth you." It is under these circumstances that the church has always gained its most signal victories, and when these principles of duty exercise an abiding influence over the life of every disciple, the kingdoms of this world will soon become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.\*

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\* There is matter for thought in the following remarks of Neander :

"History teaches us to estimate aright the deep significance of this Christian truth, ['the mediation of Christ'] here developed from the words of the Apostle. The entire dependence of all Christians alike upon this one advocacy, to the exclusion of every other, being based upon this truth ; we accordingly see that whenever it became obscured in the Christian consciousness, that dependence was again, as in the ante-Christian period, transferred to a human priesthood and to a multiplicity of mediations, and again the distinction between priests and laity, between spiritual and secular, found admission. And thus will it ever be, when this reference of the religious consciousness in all believers, to the one mediation through Christ, is cast in the back ground ; is obscured or misunderstood." —*Neander on John, translated by Mrs. Conant, p. 57.*

"The word 'anointing' suggests to us the ordinances of the old dispensation, from which it was borrowed. Kings, priests, prophets, received their consecration to the office

Such, then, is the privilege, and such the duty of every disciple of Christ. It enters into the elementary idea of discipleship. With this every other subsequent idea must be in harmony. No ecclesiastical system which we form can either liberate a disciple from this obligation, or take away his privilege of thus laboring for Christ. Whatever offices are cre-

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appointed them by God through an anointing,—the symbol of the power imparted to them by God through his Spirit for the fulfilment of their calling. By the outward and visible was signified that which, in its fulness and completion, was to be wrought inwardly upon the spirit. Now that which was expressed outwardly under the old dispensation, and by a single act, is in the New Testament converted wholly into the inward and spiritual, and working from within embraces the entire life. That which under the old dispensation was restricted to individuals, entrusted in some manner with the guidance of God's people,—individuals who were thereby separated from the body of the people,—now under the new dispensation belongs to the people of God universally. The limitations of the Old Testament are burst asunder by the spirit of the New. First of all, its founder himself, the sovereign in God's kingdom, the Savior—is called the Anointed, the Christ, as having been consecrated to his work through the fulness of the indwelling Spirit of God ; as possessing in himself the fulness, the sum of all those divine powers, which were

ated in the church, are created for the purpose of enabling the disciple the better to discharge this duty. They are made for the church, the church is not made for them; and it becomes us ever to be watchful, lest by any error the church of Christ be deprived of this, the main-spring of all its efficiency.

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only imparted singly as special gifts to the prophets of the Old Testament. So, by virtue of their fellowship with him, are all who are redeemed by him made partakers of the Holy Spirit which he imparts. From the fulness of the divine nature, the divine power dwelling in him, he imparts to all. This is the inward anointing, the inward consecration whereby they are inwardly set apart from the world, as those who belong to God through Christ. All are admitted without distinction to the same fellowship with him, and receive from him the same inward consecration to their divine mission through the Holy Spirit. Henceforth there exists no more among the people of God any such distinction as under the old Testament between kings, priests, prophets and people; but all collectively are in like manner consecrated to God, have an equal part in that inward consecration, in the illuminating and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. It is one royal priestly generation, whose nobility and high office is alike the heritage of all; all are prophets, through that common illumination of the Holy Spirit. Such are the weighty thoughts contained in that single word, that honorable designation of believers."—*Ibid.*, pp. 126-8.

I have thus far spoken of the gifts which are common to every man of a sane mind. But almost every man has some peculiar gift, that is, some naturally bestowed means of usefulness. This also he is bound in the same manner to consecrate to the service of the Master. A brief allusion to some of these will sufficiently illustrate my meaning. One man may be endowed with uncommon conversational ability, so that in the ordinary intercourse of society, he readily leads the minds of men in any direction he chooses. The disciple of Christ is not at liberty to use this talent for the purpose of attaining to social pre-eminence, or for the gratification of personal vanity; he must use it as a means of winning souls to Christ. Beautiful illustrations of this form of consecration of talent were seen in the lives of the late William Wilberforce and Joseph John Gurney. Another disciple may be endowed with skill in the conduct of mercantile affairs, so that, with ease, he can accumulate a fortune, when other men would

merely earn a subsistence. This talent he has no right to employ for the purpose of hoarding up wealth for himself, or for his children, or of procuring the means of luxurious extravagance, or fashionable display. "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life are not of the Father, but of the world." He must consecrate this gift to God, and remember that he will be called to account for this, as for every other talent. And while such a man should abound in almsgiving, let him be his own almoner, laboring with his own hands, and not the hands of others in the work of benevolence. Another may have been gifted with skill in managing affairs, in arranging and carrying forward plans for the labor of others, and in guiding masses of men to right conclusions in all matters of public concernment. This talent should be given to the cause of religion and benevolence. Such men, instead of leaving the charge of all our benevolent institutions to the ministry, should assume it themselves. They can do it better than we,

and the gift was granted to them for this very purpose. It belongs to Christ, and to him must it be cheerfully rendered.

These gifts to which I have referred, are bestowed upon Christians for the general service of the church of Christ. There are but few men who are not endowed with some one of them, which it is their duty faithfully to improve. I must, however, turn to those gifts which have special reference to the ministry of the word.

It frequently happens, that a brother engaged in secular business is endowed with a talent for public speaking. On matters of general interest, he is heard by his fellow-citizens with pleasure and profit. This talent is more largely bestowed than we commonly suppose; and it would be more frequently observed, if we desired to cultivate and develop it. Now, a disciple who is able successfully to address men on secular subjects, is surely competent to address them on the subject in which he takes an immeasurably greater interest. This talent



should specially be offered up in sacrifice to Christ. The voice of such brethren should be heard in the conference room, and in the prayer meeting. They have no right to lay up this talent, more than any other, in a napkin. And still more is it incumbent on the churches, to foster and improve gifts of this kind. Thus we arrive at the order of lay preachers, formerly a most efficient aid in the work of spreading the gospel. I believe that there are but few churches among us, in the ordinary enjoyment of religion, who have not much of this talent undiscovered and unemployed. Let them search out and improve it. Every church would thus be able to maintain out-stations, where small congregations might be gathered, which would shortly grow up into churches, able themselves to become lights to the surrounding neighborhood. I know of but few means by which the efficiency of our denomination could be so much increased as by a return to our former practice in this respect. |

But, besides this, it seems plainly to be the

will of Christ that some of his disciples should addict themselves exclusively to the ministry of the gospel. Such men are called elders, presbyters, bishops, ministers of the word, or stewards of the mysteries of God. If it be asked, under what circumstances may a believer undertake this service?—I answer, the New Testament, as it seems to me, always refers to it as a calling to which a man is moved by the Holy Ghost. No one may therefore enter the ministry, except from the motive of solemn, conscientious duty. If he choose it as a profession, for the sake of worldly advantage, or that he may enjoy a life of leisure, or be enabled the better to pursue some favorite studies, he has mistaken his calling. No man will ever succeed in any undertaking, who pursues it as a means to the attainment of something else; least of all, when he makes a convenience of the service of God in the ministry of reconciliation.

If it be asked how a man may know that he is called of God to this work, I answer, the

evidence seems to me to be two-fold. In the first place, he must be conscious of a love for the work itself, not for what in other respects he may gain by it ; and also, there must be impressed on his soul an abiding conviction, that, unless he devote himself to this service, he can in no wise answer a good conscience towards God. With the Apostle, he must be conscious that a necessity is laid upon him, yea, that a woe rests upon him, if he preach not the gospel. He who is impressed by no such convictions, had, I think, better pursue some other vocation.

This is the first indication of the man's duty. In the next place, he must exhibit such evidences of his call to this work as shall secure for him the approbation of his brethren. Of his own feelings *he* must be the judge ; of his qualifications *they* must be the judges. When both he and they, after prayerful deliberation, unite in the same opinion, then he may conclude that he is called of God to the ministerial office. Neither of these evidences alone is

sufficient ; the union of them alone is satisfactory.

The New Testament, I think, recognizes two forms of ministerial labor ; that of evangelists and that of pastors. Evangelists are specially preachers, or missionaries. Men called to this office are endowed with peculiar gifts for awakening the careless, arousing the secure, directing the attention of men to the subject of religion, and thus planting churches where Christ has not been named. The particular value of such an order of ministers, in such a country as our own, is, I think, apparent. Many of the fathers of the ministry in all this region, the men who laid the foundations of your present prosperity, were, for much of their time, evangelists ; and worthily did they fulfil the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus.

Besides evangelists, the New Testament authorizes the appointment of pastors, that is of ministers of the gospel placed over particular churches. The calling of such a man is

not to the cure of souls generally ; but, first of all, of the souls of that particular people. He believes that Christ has placed him over a separate church ; from that church he receives his support ; and, for both reasons, he is bound to devote to them his whole service. It is his duty “to warn every man and teach every man, that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus : whereunto he is to labor according to the working that worketh in him mightily.” It is his duty to make known clearly and explicitly, and with tears, the danger and guilt of the impenitent, to arouse the conscience, to point the inquiring soul to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, to unfold the riches of divine love to the believing, to guard the disciples against conformity to the world, to stimulate them by every holy motive to higher attainments in piety and closer conformity to Christ, to reclaim the backslider, to counsel the tempted, to caution the unwary, to comfort the sick, to speak peace to the dying believer, to suggest to his brethren

means of usefulness, to watch over the discipline of the church, in all things showing himself a pattern of good works, and ever doing the *same work* which he urges upon them.— He is to labor publicly, holding up the cross of Christ before his people on the Sabbath, and on all occasions when he can collect them to hear his message. Wherever he calls them to assemble he should meet with them. He will accomplish but little by urging them to leave their secular business for a meeting for prayer, while he is too much occupied in miscellaneous business to attend it himself. But, besides this, he must follow them to their homes, and press upon them individually the claims of the Most High. With Paul, he must “teach publicly, and from house to house, testifying repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ,” if he would finish his course with joy,” and at the close of his life take his people to witness “that he is pure from the blood of all men.” My brethren, is not this a work great enough for any man? Can any duty

vie with it in importance? Doth it not then become us "to give ourselves wholly to it, that our profiting may appear unto all? Can we have any excuse before God, if we fritter away our lives in miscellaneous business, and give to the work of God the mere shreds and clippings of our time?"

You see, then, the means which the Savior has provided for the universal triumph of his kingdom upon earth. He requires every disciple, as soon as he becomes a partaker of divine grace, to become a herald of salvation to his fellow-men. He is a fountain, from which is to flow a river of living water. The doing of this, is the test of his discipleship. If he is a branch that beareth not fruit, his end is to be cut off. He is "the salt of the earth, and if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall *it* be salted." It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Secondly, every disciple is bound to employ for Christ every peculiar gift with which he may have been endowed. Thirdly,

every man possessed of the gifts for the ministry, mentioned in the New Testament, is bound to consecrate them to Christ, either in connection with his secular pursuits or by devoting his whole time to this particular service.

If this be so, you see that in the church of Christ there is no ministerial caste ; no class elevated in rank above their brethren, on whom devolves the discharge of the more dignified or more honorable portions of Christian labor, while the rest of the disciples are to do nothing but raise the funds necessary for their support. The minister does the same work that is to be done by every other member of the body of Christ ; but, since he does it exclusively, he may be expected to do it more to edification. Is it his business to labor for the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of the body of Christ, so is it theirs. In every thing which they do as disciples, he is to be their example. I know that we now restrict to the ministry the administration of the ordinances, and to this rule I think there can be



no objection. But we all know that for this restriction we have no example in the New Testament. In other respects it is difficult to discover, in principle, the difference between the labors of a minister and those of any other disciple, in conversation, or in a sabbath school, or a bible class, or in a conference room. All are laboring to produce the same result, the conversion of men, and by the same means, the inculcation of the teachings of Christ and his apostles. The ministry is made for the church, and not the church for the ministry. We are not Boodhist priests, or Mahomedan dervishes, or members of a papal or any other hierarchy, or a class above or aside from our brethren, but simply ambassadors of Christ, your servant for Jesus sake. The chiefest of the Apostles desired no higher rank, and with it we are abundantly satisfied.

You see, then, my brethren, what is the New Testament idea of a church of Christ; it is a company of believers, each one united to Christ and pervaded by his spirit, and each

one devoting every talent, whether ordinary or peculiar, to the work of evangelizing the world. When a company of disciples is collected together in a particular community, they are the leaven by which Christ intends that whole community to be leavened. By virtue of their discipleship they are called upon to accomplish this work, and it is their duty, in his strength, to attempt it. He did not light that candle to place it under a bushel. Every individual is to become at once a herald of salvation. Those endowed with aptness to teach are to be sent to destitute and forgotten places in the vicinity, to the highways and hedges, to compel men to come to the gospel supper. The ministry are to devote to this work their whole time, as ensamples and leaders of the flock; surveying the whole field and suggesting to each brother his appropriate sphere of labor. Let the disciples of Christ thus obey the master in the most depraved city among us, and, by the grace of God, its whole population would soon be subdued unto Christ. The

moral atmosphere would be purified by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, "the work of righteousness would be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever."

And when the disciples of Christ of every name thus obey his last command, making, as he did, the conversion of the world the great object for which they live, the last act in the great drama of man's redemption will have opened. Private believers will feel their obligation to carry the gospel to the destitute as strongly as ministers. They will then be seen by thousands, like Paul, ministering to themselves with their own hands, while they carry the gospel to regions beyond. Then will ensue the final struggle between the powers of light and the powers of darkness, for dominion over this world. Then will "the heathen be given to Christ for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." Then will the accuser of the brethren be cast out. Then from every people and tongue and nation of a regenerated world will ascend the

anthem of salvation to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb forever.

If now we need any confirmation of the truth of these views, I think we shall find it in observing the manner in which the church of Christ was first planted, under the eye of the Master. It was simply this: One individual, when called of Christ, brought other individuals to him. "John stood, and two of his disciples, and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. One of the two was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, we have found the Messiah. And he brought him to Jesus. The day following Jesus findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Philip findeth Nathaniel, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. Nathaniel saith unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip

saith unto him, Come and see." Thus, by contact of soul with soul, did the church of Christ increase. And I may add, if any one will read the gospel with this view, he will be surprised to observe how much of the recorded teaching of Christ consists of conversation addressed to individuals, in the ordinary intercourse of life.

Again, observe that no sooner had our Lord collected a little band of disciples, than he employed a large portion of them as missionaries to announce the approach of his kingdom.—From his small company of followers, he chose first twelve, and then seventy, whom he sent abroad on this errand. If every church among us furnished heralds of the gospel in like proportion, there would be no lack of ministers.

Observe, again, the circumstances under which, after the ascension of our Lord, the church of Christ commenced its victorious march over the then known world. Against it were arrayed not only the interests and lusts and pride of man, but the power of every

government, and all the influences emanating from a luxurious, refined and intelligent civilization. On what did Christ rely, as his human instruments, to prostrate this vast fabric of tasteful, venerable and cultivated idolatry?—He made no attempt to undermine and overthrow paganism in general. He published no discourses intended to prepare the public mind for the coming revolution. He sent abroad no schoolmasters, to instil the principles of secular truth into the minds of the young.—On the contrary, he met the whole power of the adversary face to face, and brought divine truth into immediate collision with long cherished and much loved moral error. He charged every disciple to proclaim the gospel at once to every creature. He selected those who were to be the first preachers of the word, the first ministers of his church, from the lower and middle walks of life—men destitute of all the advantages of special intellectual culture whom their enemies reproached as unlettered and ignorant. As cultivated talent was re-

quired, it was provided in the person of the Apostle to the Gentiles. As the church commenced, so, to the close of the inspired record, it continued. "Ye see your calling, brethren," said the Apostle, "how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty, and base things of the world, and things that are despised, hath God chosen, yea, things that are not, to bring to naught things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence." Under the conviction of these truths, Paul labored in the ministry. Though a well educated man, who had profited above many that were his equals, yet when he proclaimed the gospel in refined and luxurious Corinth, although the preaching of the cross was to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, he resolved to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified. He did from choice, precisely as his uneducated brethren did from necessity. It is

surprising to observe the entire simplicity of those efforts, by which, in an incredibly short period, the gospel was planted throughout the whole Roman Empire. We can discover no means employed to accomplish this result, but proclaiming to all men repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, imposing on every regenerated man the duty, in turn, of proclaiming the good news to his brethren, always relying, and relying wholly, on the power of the Holy Ghost.

But, it may be said, these times were unlike any that the world has since witnessed. But let us ask, does change in social condition render it necessary to adopt any new principles in conducting our efforts for the conversion of mankind? Survey our missionary field, and observe the places where the preaching of the gospel has been attended with the most remarkable success. We number among the Karens, for instance, more converts than in all our other missions together. And how was the gospel preached to them? They live in scattered



hamlets along the water courses, in the jungle, whose miasmata are fatal to a foreigner, except for a few months in the year. During this brief interval the missionary traveled among them, preaching Christ to one, or two, or ten, or twenty, as he could collect hearers. The Holy Spirit was poured out, and sinners were converted. Small churches were formed, and, from the necessity of the case, left for the remainder of the year to themselves. With the spirit of primitive Christianity, these rude men pointed their neighbors to the Savior. Ministerial gifts manifested themselves among them as they were needed, and a large number became ministers of the word. The work of God was thus carried forward with remarkable power. The brother whose labors among them have been so eminently blessed, worn down by incessant toil, was obliged to leave his station for a year or two, for the recovery of his health. On his return, fearful that his flock had been scattered during his absence, he inquired with trembling solicitude concerning

their condition. You may judge of his surprise, when he learned that about fifteen hundred persons were then awaiting baptism.— This blessed result had been accomplished by men hardly elevated at all above their brethren, for they had no knowledge whatever, beyond that contained in the New Testament, and the few books and tracts which, within a few years, had been translated into their language. The contact of soul with soul was thus leavening the lump. Pastors, as they were needed, have been raised up among them; and these are now, in a large measure, supported by the voluntary effort of the brethren. Thus is the religion of Christ displaying through this whole region its power of self-extension, by the preaching of the gospel attended by the power of the Holy Ghost.

If the question be asked, could this work have been carried on without the aid of men of more cultivated minds and larger knowledge than the Karens?—I answer, certainly not.— But I ask again, could this work have been

carried on without the labors of these rude and unlettered men, who went everywhere preaching the word? The answer is the same, certainly not. Our conclusion, then, is that God requires, and that he employs in his vineyard, all classes of laborers; and the union of all is necessary to the accomplishment of his work. In general, I think it will be found that, other things being equal, the preacher of the gospel will be most successful, whose habits of thought are not greatly elevated above those of his hearers. President Edwards was, I think, without dispute, the ablest theologian of his time. His ministry, for many years, was eminently successful in Northampton and its vicinity; but I have never heard that it was attended with any remarkable results during his missionary life among the Stockbridge Indians.

But it may perhaps be said, that in this case the people to whom the gospel was preached, were ignorant pagans; and that we cannot, from such an example, learn the best manner of extending the church of Christ among men of

intellectual culture. Let us then turn to Germany, and inquire for the circumstances under which the gospel has wrought so powerfully there. Among no people on earth has education been more widely diffused, and nowhere has teaching been conducted with more admirable skill. It is the land of Luther and of the reformation, the preceptress of Europe in science and philology. What, then, have been the facts here?

In the year 1835, a Baptist Church of believers was constituted in Hamburg, consisting of seven members, imbued in a remarkable degree with the spirit of Apostolic Christianity. Of this church, Rev. Mr. Oncken was ordained pastor. That church of seven members has already multiplied itself into 42 churches, sustaining 356 stations, numbering 4,215 communicants,\* baptized, on profession of their faith, into the name of the Lord Jesus. Each church

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\* Exclusive of those who have been removed by death and emigration. Many of them are now residing in our Western States.

is supplied with a pastor. Churches and stations are established in Northern Germany, eastward from Hamburgh to the borders of Russia; quite extensively through Southern Germany, and to some extent in Sweden and Denmark. On no other churches in Christendom does the smile of heaven so signally rest. They are, emphatically, a field which the Lord has blessed.

And how have these results been accomplished? By following the example left us by Christ and his apostles, "the little one has become a thousand, and a small nation a strong people." Every disciple acknowledged the obligation laid upon him by the last command of our Lord. The Holy Ghost bestowed upon the churches ministerial gifts adapted to the work before them. These gifts were cherished, and called into exercise. Preaching was commenced wherever the Lord opened a door. Stations were established, and the men were found to occupy them. These stations grew into churches, by which other stations were

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sustained. Thus churches were multiplied in every direction; the Holy Spirit was everywhere poured out, and much people was added to the Lord. Some of these churches now contain two or three hundred members. Almost all of them sustain stations, some of them as many as twenty or thirty; and, though it may seem incredible to some of us, all this glorious work has been accomplished, in classical Germany, without the aid of a single classically educated laborer. Would it not be possible for us to learn a lesson from our brethren in Germany?

But it will perhaps be said, this is an example from a foreign country; would the same means for extending the reign of Christ avail us equally here at home? Cast your eyes backward then, and look upon our own condition some fifty or sixty years since. The men are now living, who remember the Baptist denomination when it was the least of the thousands of Israel. We are now among the most numerous, perhaps the most numerous commu-

nion in the United States. By what means has our increase been so astonishing? How has it come to pass, that believers in such multitudes have, through our instrumentality, been added to the Lord. I think the answer at once suggests itself, if we call to mind the character of the Baptists of the preceding generation. Though plain men, generally of ordinary education, they were men of prayer, full of the Holy Ghost, each one holding himself in a special manner responsible for making known to those that were around him the truth as it is in Jesus. They were men of conference and prayer meetings, and revivals of religion; who, in barns, in school-rooms, and in private houses, wherever they could collect an audience, preached repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Every talent which a church discovered among its members, was called into the service of Christ. There was scarcely a church amongst us which had not its lay preachers, or, as they were termed, licentiates. Of these, many from time to time

entered the regular ministry, and thus pastors were supplied in proportion to our need. Our settled ministers labored not only in their own churches, but made frequent missionary tours in the more destitute regions in their vicinity, thus doing the work of evangelists. While we were thus, with singular earnestness, devoting all the means in our power to the service of Christ, the Lord added to us daily of such as should be saved. And nowhere could I appeal to the result of these labors with greater pleasure, than in the very spot on which I stand. The numerous and flourishing churches that fill the whole of Western New York, this University, with all its strength in the present, and its boundless hopes for the future, all owe their existence to the self-denials, the preaching, the prayers of these plain, pious, venerable and never to be forgotten men. "They have labored, and you have entered into their labors." Of late years our progress has been much less rapid. Our views in many of these respects have changed. May not this change in our



views be connected with the change in our prosperity?

These instances seem to me to throw some light upon the teachings of the New Testament on this subject. I fear that we are in danger in this matter of forsaking the instructions of Christ and his apostles, and following the traditions of men, not observing the tendencies to which they lead. The Reformers brought with them many of the errors of the church of Rome. May we not have derived through them, some erroneous notions respecting the church and the Christian ministry? Can any one fail to perceive, that the views of our Hamburg brethren on this subject are more in accordance with the New Testament than those of Luther, or Calvin, or Melancthon, or John Knox?

The doctrines here presented seem to me to have an important bearing on the subject of Christian and ministerial education.

The principles which should govern us in this matter, seem to be something like the following:—

I have said that every disciple of Christ is under imperative obligations to become a herald of salvation to his fellow men, and to beseech them, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. This can only be done by the action of mind upon mind. It is a case in which the mind of one man seeks to exert an influence over the mind of another. To accomplish this result, it is obvious that disciplined is more powerful than undisciplined mind. We are taught by Christ, that we are under obligations not only to *use*, but to *improve* every talent committed to us, that we may have the more to consecrate to his service. The slothful servant was condemned because he returned his talent just in the condition in which he had received it. This is the universal condition on which we are allowed to hold every gift entrusted to us. But, if this be the universal rule, how emphatic is its application to intellectual gifts, the most valuable of all the talents with which we are entrusted. Hence, every disciple of Christ is under the most imperative

obligations to enlarge his knowledge, to cultivate his faculties, to discipline his mental energies ; that he may have the more to devote to the service of the Master. A wilfully ignorant Christian is a contradiction. He is a barren fig tree. He is the indolent servant who returned his talent, which he had kept wrapt up in a napkin. When the Master shall ask what he has gained by trading, what will he reply ? Brethren, the law of the Lord is exceeding broad, and it would be well for us if we more frequently contemplated the universality of its application.

When I say this, I beg not to be misunderstood. I do not mean to teach that Christ requires you all to qualify yourselves for what are sometimes called the learned professions, or to pursue any particular course of mental culture. I mean that every man, whatever be his calling, should avail himself of every means of mental cultivation which Providence has placed within his reach ; and that he should strive, with all earnestness, to place such means

within the reach of his children. Let our youth, universally, be provided with every opportunity for generous intellectual discipline. I can see no reason why a farmer, or a mechanic, or a merchant, or a manufacturer, should not read as good books, and be as well-informed and intelligent a man, as a lawyer, or a minister, or a physician. I have thought, that our institutions of higher education should be organized upon this principle ; providing education not for one class, but for all classes, thus enabling all classes to avail themselves of their advantages. To labor for these results seems to me to be our duty as parents, and as citizens, but above all as disciples of Christ. If we are bound to consecrate our all to Him, we are just as much bound to render that all as valuable as possible, that so we may have the richer gift to lay upon his altar. Looking upon the subject from a Christian point of view, this seems to me to be the principle underlying every other, which should govern all our efforts to educate ourselves, and to provide the means

of education for our children. Were this principle universally recognized, is it possible to estimate its effects upon the progress and stability of individual piety, and the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ?

But, secondly, God sometimes bestows upon individuals particular talents, which may be made the means of special usefulness. One has a remarkable capacity for managing affairs, another for mechanical invention, another for philological research, and another for the pursuit of abstract science. In such a case, it would seem that such talent is to be cultivated with special care. It is a means of usefulness which has not been created in vain, and is not to be recklessly thrown away. On the same principle, if a man has been endowed with a talent for public speaking, though employed in a secular calling, he must embrace every opportunity in his power to render this talent serviceable to Christ. Besides availing himself of every means of general culture, he should devote particular attention to the improvement

of this special gift. He should give himself to the study of the word of God, and should labor as much as may be in his power, to render his instructions profitable to his fellow men.

But, now, suppose it manifest that God has called a man to devote his whole time to the ministry of the word; it is obvious that the obligation to improve his talent to the utmost, is specially imperative. It is by means of his intellectual faculties that he attempts to influence the minds of his fellow men. This is the service to which they are exclusively devoted. He is laboring in the cause which employed all the faculties of the Son of man while on earth. For the use and the improvement of his intellectual powers, *he* must render a specially solemn account. The means of improvement, which God has placed in the power of those whom he calls to the ministry, may be very dissimilar; inasmuch as they may vary with age, domestic relations, pecuniary ability, and degree of talent for acquisition. God assigns these conditions as he pleases; all that he

requires is, that all that he has given should be faithfully improved, and consecrated to his service. From the views which we entertain respecting the ministry, it is evident that a large portion of our candidates for the sacred office must have attained to some maturity of age. It must certainly be difficult to ascertain whether or not a person in mere youth possesses the qualifications which the Apostle Paul teaches us must be required in a candidate.

If it be then our purpose to provide the means of improvement for those among us who are called to the ministry, it has seemed to me that we should bear in mind these elementary ideas of our denomination on this subject. If we are willing to follow, and not to lead, the Spirit of God—that is, if we educate no man for the ministry until we are satisfied, not that he *may be*, but that he *has been* called of God to the work of preaching the gospel—we shall always have among our candidates a large number of those who have passed the period of youth, and for whom the

studies of youth would be unsuitable, if not useless. Yet these are the very men to whom appropriate culture would be specially valuable. Others, in various degrees, have been more favored with preparatory education, and the means for more extended discipline. The means and advantages of our candidates must, therefore, be exceedingly dissimilar. If, then, we would labor to give to the ministry the means of improvement, we must provide those means for them all. A system of ministerial education, adapted to the condition of but one in twenty of our candidates, commences with the avowed intention of doing but one-twentieth part of its work, and of helping those only who have the least need of its assistance. We should therefore provide for all our brethren whom God has called to this service, the best instruction in our power; adapted, as far as possible, not to any theoretical view, but to the actual condition of the mass of our candidates, leaving each individual, in the exercise of a sound and pious discretion, to determine



the extent to which he is able to avail himself of our services. While means should be fully provided for pursuing an extended course of education, we must never lose sight of the large number of our brethren to whom an extended course would be impossible.

But in what way soever a candidate pursues his studies, whether by himself, or under the instruction of an elder brother in the ministry, or in a seminary devoted to this purpose, the question remains to be considered, to what points shall his efforts be directed. In attempting to answer this question, it is important to determine, in the first place, what object he has in view. His object is to prepare himself to be, not a teacher, or a professor, or an agent, or a philological scholar, or a popular writer, but an evangelist or a pastor.\* His calling is

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\* It is not by any means asserted that these various gifts are not useful, or are not to be cultivated. What I say is, that they are not particularly connected with the ministry, and therefore should be cultivated elsewhere. Least of all should a course of education for the Christian ministry be modified for the sake of preparing men for other and different pursuits.

to persuade men to be reconciled to God, and to build up those who are reconciled in their most holy faith. His studies, then, must all bear directly upon this object, for which "it has pleased God to put him into the ministry." The means which he is to use in accomplishing this object, are simple. He is to make known the will of God as it has been revealed in the New Testament, and to urge men to obey it.

It is obvious then, first of all, that the minister of the gospel must be, as thoroughly as possible, acquainted with the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles. These contain the precise truth inspired by the Holy Ghost, which he is to communicate to others. He is authorized to make known to men as the commandment of God the whole of this revelation, and nothing whatever beyond it. It is precisely this truth, and nothing else, that the Spirit of God has promised to accompany with his almighty power. Now, I think that a man may be materially assisted to understand the New

Testament by improved mental discipline. He needs to acquire the habit of continuous and abstract thought, the power of concentrating his mind upon a subject, and keeping it steady to its work. He must think through the thoughts of the Bible, that he may be able to present them clearly to others. But let me say that this is far from being a merely intellectual process. Simply intellectual power can never attain to it. There is needed, besides this, a devout and holy temper of mind, without which mere mental strength can do but little. These things are "hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes." Of all this you are fully aware from your own experience. When you have been desirous of ascertaining the meaning of any particular passage of the scriptures, in order to impress it more deeply on your fellow men, in what manner have you been most successful, by turning over the works of men, or by the earnest thinking of a soul lying in lowly prostration before the Spirit of infinite wisdom? I do not stand here to dis-

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parage either human learning, or logical acuteness, but I say that these, without the aid of a holy temper of mind, will enable us but imperfectly to understand the mind of the Spirit. What we need is, to know, not the thoughts of man, but the thoughts of God, and these will be best understood by the soul illumined by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Here I may however remark, in passing, that the revelation given to us consists of ideas, and not of words. These ideas may be expressed in our own language, or in the languages in which they were written. If a man have the opportunity of reading the Bible in its original languages, let him by all means learn to do it, and do it thoroughly. Let him embrace this and every other opportunity of generous intellectual culture. No man may innocently reject any means by which he may add to the accuracy of his knowledge of the word of God. But if such opportunity as he may desire have not been given him, let him not despair, or think himself set aside as a vessel in whom the

Master has no pleasure. Let him study the scriptures more earnestly, and pray more devoutly, using every means which God has placed in his power; and the Spirit will assuredly lead him into all necessary truth.

But suppose this truth to have been arrived at; it is then to be presented to the human heart, so as to produce the effect of persuasion. Here is required a knowledge of the human mind, its moral condition, its opposition to God, its subjection to earthly affections, and of all the phases which it assumes when its chambers of imagery are illuminated by the light of divine truth. In order to acquire this knowledge, the man must become acquainted, first of all, with his own moral nature, and the modes of its operation. When he tells what he has himself experienced, he may be assured that in general he speaks the language of humanity. Here also he needs to be in the habit of personal conversation with his fellow men on the subject of religion. Hence it is that no man is ever an effective preacher, who does not visit

his people for the sake of urging upon them personally the claims of religion. Have you never observed how pungent the preaching of a minister becomes who has spent a few weeks in the midst of a revival of religion, where his whole time is occupied in intercourse with awakened souls, and how such a minister carries everywhere with him the spirit of a revival? It is thus that we learn to apply the truths of the gospel to the minds of men.

But a minister is to teach publicly, and from house to house.

Under the first of these divisions of his duty must be placed the composition of a sermon. He whose weekly business it is to address men publicly, should, if possible, understand the nature and objects of a discourse, and should learn to construct a discourse correctly. He should acquire the ability to think out a train of thought, which embodies one idea revealed by the spirit of truth, and to lead the minds of men in the direction which he intends.—Thorough, faithful and honest dealing with a

candidate, may here be of eminent advantage to his future ministry.

But suppose this train of thought to be thus prepared, shall it be written or unwritten? Each has its advantages, but I am constrained to believe that the value of written discourses has been in this country greatly overrated. Speaking an unwritten train of thought is by far the noblest and most effective exercise of mind, provided the labor of preparation in both cases be the same. I cannot but think that we have been the losers, by cultivating too exclusively the habit of written discourses.

But the discourse having been prepared, it has yet to be delivered. The cultivation of a clear and impressive delivery, free from awkwardness, vulgarity and oddity, and deeply imbued with the tones expressive of natural feeling, is of the greatest importance to a public speaker. It has surprised me that in seminaries, of which the object is to educate preachers, so little time should be devoted to the art of delivery. From want of attention to this

**S**ubject, good and able men frequently attain to very moderate success, and are shoved aside by men, in other respects, very greatly **t**heir inferiors.

But the gospel is to be preached not only publicly, but from house to house. In preparing for this part of his duty a young minister may receive much valuable instruction from an elder brother who has himself been a diligent pastor. The sick are to be visited, the mourners consoled, the thoughtless aroused, the secure alarmed, the convicted urged to decision, the penitent pointed to Christ, the wandering reclaimed, the feeble encouraged ; and all this by personal appeal to individuals, and he who has done it successfully, may give much valuable counsel to him who is just entering upon the work. Until a minister has learned not only to perform but to love this part of his labor, he cannot hope to be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. I do not know of a more common or a more just ground of complaint against the ministry, than that of the



neglect of parochial visitation. It seems strange that a man whose sole calling it is to urge men to repentance, should refuse to perform this duty, in this particular form, especially when his people themselves invite him to perform it. They desire that he should converse with them individually on the subject of their souls' salvation, and shall he consider such conversation a drudgery and leave his people unwarned? If any one desires to see this subject treated of with great force and eloquence, I ask leave to commend him to the perusal of "Baxter's Reformed Pastor."

Such seem to me, after some reflection, to be the points to which the attention of a candidate for the ministry should be directed. To these I know many others are commonly added, and the number of additions is continually increasing. We, however, seem frequently to forget that the time is rapidly approaching every young man, when, if he would be any thing but a retailer of other men's opinions, he must be a teacher unto himself; and, that the

sooner he can be induced to put himself under his own instruction, the sooner will he attain to the stature of a full grown man.

It is possible, my brethren, that in the views I have thus frankly suggested, there may seem to you somewhat of strangeness ; but let me respectfully request that you will examine them, not in the light of the opinions and practice of men, but in the light of the teachings of Christ and his Apostles. Believe them and put them in practice in just so far as they conform to the revealed will of God, and no farther. This I may reasonably claim of every disciple of Christ, and I have no desire to claim anything more.

At the present moment, a right understanding of the duties of the private disciples of Christ, and of the ministers, and of the relations which they sustain to the Master and to each other, seems to me of incalculable importance. Since the era of the reformation, Protestantism has made no aggressions upon Popery, and the same geographical lines have

for centuries separated the parties from each other. But now it is evident that a contest for the mastery of the world between the powers of light and the powers of darkness is imminent and inevitable. The nations in which the Bible is freely circulated, and the gospel publicly preached, are ranging themselves on the one side ; and the nations from which the Bible is prohibited, and where the preaching of Christ crucified is forbidden, are ranging themselves on the other. Within the life-time of men who now hear me, the question will probably be decided, whether the kingdom of Christ is now to proceed to universal victory, or ages of intellectual and moral darkness are again to overspread the earth. It is for such a crisis as this that the disciples of Christ are now called upon to prepare.

But more than this. It is obvious that this question is really to be decided in our own country. So long as the light of true Christianity shines brightly *here*, the rest of the world cannot be enveloped in darkness. Hence

It is that the intention is publicly avowed of overturning our systems of universal education, and thus bringing us under the power of a foreign hierarchy. In aid of this design, immigrants by hundreds of thousands are annually arriving on our shores, who are at once admitted to all the privileges of citizenship, while they are conscientiously bound to obedience to a foreign ecclesiastical potentate. At the same time the press is scattering broadcast over our land the seeds of frivolity and licentiousness. Unbounded prosperity is providing for every class of our people the means of sensual gratification. The rise of prices, consequent upon the increase of the precious metals, is stimulating to yet greater excess the desire of acquisition already sufficiently rife amongst us. But critical as is our position, there would be nothing to alarm us, if the disciples of Christ, holy and self-denying, were, with one accord, ranging themselves under the banner of their Master, and using every means in their power to prepare for the coming onset ;

and the ministry, in the van of the Lord's hosts, filled with the power of the Holy Ghost, were by precept and example training their brethren for the approaching conflict.

But what is the condition of our churches of all denominations at this critical moment? The disciples of Christ seem to be fast losing the distinctive marks of their profession. Self-denial for the cause of the Redeemer will soon become the exception, rather than the rule. In large districts of our country, the admissions to the churches are not as numerous as the removals by death. In the mean time, the number of candidates for the ministry is diminishing, in all denominations, not only relatively, but absolutely. Nay, it is diminishing more rapidly than the figures indicate, for of the reputed number of candidates a considerable portion never enter the ministry; and of those who enter it, a greater and greater number are annually leaving it for other pursuits. And what is the remedy proposed in this unusual crisis? It has been recommended, in order to meet this emergency, to

reduce the cost of ministerial education, to extend the term of ministerial study, and to increase the pecuniary emoluments of the ministry. In other words, we are told to address stronger motives to the self-interests of men, that so we may induce them to enter upon a calling essentially self-denying. When the whole power of the adversary is thundering at the gates, and the crisis requires every man to stand to his arms, we content ourselves with offering large bounty to officers, and allow every citizen to retire from the conflict. Was ever a victory gained by strategy such as this?

In our own denomination, it is said that we have 4,000 churches destitute of preachers of the gospel. What is to be done to meet this deficiency? Does all that we are doing furnish us with the shadow of a hope that this demand can be supplied? Nay, multiply our present efforts to any practicable extent, and compared with the work to be done, the discrepancy between the means and the end is such as to awaken the feeling of the ludicrous. Is it not

time, then, to examine the whole subject from its foundations? May not some light be derived from considering attentively the doctrine and examples of Christ and his apostles?

Is it not evident that if we are attempting to do the work of God, we must do it in obedience to his commandments, and in conformity with the principles which he has established? Ministerial gifts have been bestowed upon the church by Christ ever since he ascended on high, and led captivity captive. He has commanded us to pray the Lord of the harvest to bestow these gifts upon men, and thus send forth laborers into the harvest. These gifts, in whatsoever manner bestowed, we are to receive and cherish and improve. By no rules of our own are we to restrict their number, or diminish their usefulness. We are to accept thankfully all the means which Christ has bestowed upon us for the advancement of his cause. And we are to cultivate a ministry after the example of the apostles, men relying upon prayer and the Holy Ghost, and in self-

denial, crucifixion to the world, its maxims, its amusements and its frivolities, setting an example to the flock, while they devote themselves daily to the work of saving souls. To every one whom Christ has thus called let us give every intellectual advantage, which the circumstances of his individual case render suitable. Having done this, we have done all in our power for the improvement of the ministry, and we may reasonably expect on our labors the blessing of God.

But when all this has been done, but little will have been accomplished. If you, brethren, would improve the ministry, you must begin by improving yourselves. Ministerial gifts are not bestowed upon a slumbering, lukewarm and worldly church. And suppose they were bestowed, of what value would they be either to you or to others, if you are surrendered up to the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life? The ministry can only labor successfully as you labor with them. If you then really desire to witness the



triumph of the cause of the Redeemer, you must begin to live a holy, self-denying life. You men of wealth must cease from accumulation, and devote not only your income but yourselves to the work of the Lord. You men in active business must be content to accumulate less rapidly, that you may have more of your time to consecrate to the salvation of men. Ye who, professing obedience to Christ, are yet living in subjection to the maxims of the world, eagerly chasing its frivolities, and teaching the lesson to your children, must commence a life of godly simplicity and Christian self-denial. Every disciple, by his mode of life, must show that he is not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world. When ministers and people thus begin to labor in earnest for Christ, we shall witness results such as the ages have not yet seen.

The nineteenth century since the advent of Christ, is now half completed, and the world still lieth in wickedness. Is it not high time that the heathen were given to Christ for his inher-

itance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession? Never, since the beginning, have the disciples of Christ enjoyed such advantages for the universal dissemination of the gospel as at present. Let us then go up and possess the land, for we are well able to overcome it. Nothing is now wanting to subdue the world unto Christ, but an universal, earnest, self-sacrificing effort of his disciples, in firm reliance upon the Spirit from on high. Thus far we have failed in just so far as we have trusted to our own wisdom instead of the wisdom of the Master. We mourn over the vices of the land. We invoke the majesty of the law, and laws are not executed. We unite in associations, and our associations are rent asunder. We join hands, now with one, and then with another struggling party, and we are sold in the political shambles like brute beasts. Let us then abjure all such vain alliances, and commence the work of reforming the world by obeying the precepts of Jesus. If we can convert men to Christ, the work of reformation

will be done. By no other means will the flood of iniquity be stayed.

Do you not believe that if all the disciples of Christ in any of our cities or villages thus labored for Christ, they would soon arrest the progress of iniquity, and make it a garden of the Lord? Suppose that we in the same spirit undertook, in solemn earnestness, the conversion of the world; would it not soon be given unto Christ for his possession? Brethren, on whom does the responsibility for the present state of our cities, of our country, and of the world rest? Awake, then, and shake yourselves from your lethargy! Put ye in the sickle and reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

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The following Citations are appended as illustration of the doctrines discussed in the sermon :

**OBJECTS OF THE MINISTRY :**

Acts, 26 ; 17.

2 Cor., 5 ; 20. 2 Cor., 5 ; 20. Acts, 20 ; 24.

**CALL TO THE MINISTRY TO BE JUDGED OF BY THE INDIVIDUAL :**

1 Tim., 1 ; 12. 1 Cor., 9 ; 16.

**QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE MINISTRY, TO BE JUDGED OF BY THE CHURCH :**

1 Tim., 3 ; 2—7.

Titus, 1 ; 6—9.

Paul's preaching in Corinth

1 Cor., 11 ; 1—8 and 11—12.









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